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## THE WEEK :

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All articles, contributions, and letters on matters pertaining to the editorial department should be addressed to the Editor, and not to any other person who may be supposed to be connected with the paper.

MR. DALTON MCCARTHY has lost no time in redeeming the promise made in his public addresses during the recess. From the feeling elicited in the House during his speech in introducing his Bill to amend the North-West Territories Act, it is evident that his object, if gained at all, will be gained only after a severe and prolonged struggle. There is a good deal of force in some of the criticisms which have been made touching the matter of that speech. If Mr. McCarthy's sole object were the abolition of the use of the French as an official language in the North-West Territories, his speech does not commend his political sagacity. Had he based his advocacy of the proposed change simply on its merits, as relating to the Territories, it is difficult to see how he could have been effectively answered, or his proposal rejected. Whatever view might be held as to the necessity for the use of both languages in the Dominion Parliament, and in those Provinces which have a large French population, no one could have shown any good reason why the official use of French should be made compulsory in a new Province or Territory containing but an insignificant percentage of French-speaking inhabitants. The hardship of entailing this trouble and expense in perpetuity upon the people of the North-West as now constituted is too evident to admit of serious denial. Mr. McCarthy showed effectively that the dual language arrangement was not intended by the Mackenzie Government, and that no such provision was made by their North-West Territories Act as originally drafted. The objectionable clause was added in the Senate, at whose instance does not clearly appear, and was accepted by the Government and the Commons only to save the Bill, as the close of the Session was too near to admit of its passing through the necessary stages if the amendment had been rejected. This fact, which was not disputed in the Commons, could not have failed to produce considerable effect had the question been simply one affecting the North-West Territories. There is no doubt, moreover, that the history of North-West settlement has been quite different from that anticipated at the time the Act was framed and passed. Those who proposed or favoured the clause in question had good reason, seemingly, to expect a large migration of French Canadians from Quebec to the great prairies. They thought the provision for the dual languages a fair and necessary one in view of the large proportion of French-speaking settlers which it was sup-

posed would be found in the future population. This expectation not having been realized, and there being now no reason to suppose that such settlers will ever form more than a small fraction of the North-West people, what could be simpler or more reasonable than for the Parliament of to-day to expunge the clause which found its way into the original Act under such circumstances and in consequence of such unfulfilled expectations?

THE narrow ground of practical politics did not, we may infer, suit Mr. Dalton McCarthy's purpose, and that of the Equal Rights Association which, we suppose, he may be understood to represent. He chose the bolder course of basing his motion on general principles, broad enough in their application to include all the provinces of the Dominion. It is no sufficient condemnation of this course to say that it jeopardizes his Bill, probably insures its present defeat. That Bill ostensibly abolishes the official use of French in the Territories, where it is so nearly useless that no tolerable argument, unless the cry of vested rights or constitutional compact can be regarded as an argument, can be constructed to justify its continued use. But the arguments used by the mover of the Bill strike at the official use of French throughout the whole Dominion, and are, to say the least, of very doubtful validity. It is one thing to claim or admit that there is no sufficient reason for continuing to print official documents in two languages in a province in which but one language is used by all but a small minority of the population. It is another and a very different thing to say that no people whose constitution compels or sanctions the use of two official languages can ever become one nation, or that, even if that premise were admitted, the conclusion would be justified that the minority, no matter how large and influential, should be compelled by law to learn and use the language of the majority under penalty of being shut out, not only from all part in legislation, but even from all intelligent knowledge of public affairs. History, it has already been pretty clearly shown, fails to support the former contention. It is doubtful if British or British-Canadian fair play can sanction the latter. The golden rule almost surely condemns it. It is even doubtful if expediency, the presiding genius of modern politics, is not dead against it. A chronic, exasperating sense of injustice and harsh treatment fermenting in the breasts of two-fifths of the whole population of the Dominion would be a more fatal obstacle to national consolidation than the use of half-a-dozen official languages by as many sections of a contented people could possibly be. If Canadian unity be not possible with French as an official language in Quebec, it is certain that national unity would be impossible after its abolition, at least for generations to come. But Mr. McCarthy's attack on dual languages as wrong on general principles, instead of as a mistake in the North-West Act, was not his only tactical blunder. The most moderate regard for the principle of local autonomy, which is certainly fundamental to the Canadian confederation, should have led him to put his motion in such a form as to leave freedom of action in the matter to the North-West Assembly, instead of forcing the proposed reform without the least hint of regard for the views and wishes of the people of the territory. Of course the Dominion Parliament framed the original North-West Act and alone has power to change it, but none the less the matter in question is one which clearly comes within the proper sphere of the local representative assembly, and should be dealt with accordingly.

THERE are in various quarters pretty clear indications that the question of "better terms" for the Provinces will shortly be again forced upon the attention of Parliament. Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Quebec—those three Provinces at least—are rapidly approaching a pecuniary condition which will almost inevitably result in an appeal to the Dominion for larger allowances. And, of course, if the three Provinces act in concert the demand cannot be resisted. We are not sure that it ought to be resisted to the bitter end. It is easy for a Province like Ontario, with ample resources and a good balance at its banker's, to declaim against the improvidence or avarice of her less fortunate sisters. There is undeniably great

force in her arguments. If Quebec would cease to legalize the ecclesiastical exactions which are such a drain upon the energies and resources of her people, she might easily attain a solvent and comfortable position without further aid from the Dominion Exchequer. If the Maritime Provinces would adopt Ontario's excellent municipal system, and let their people learn to tax themselves for roads and bridges and other local improvements, instead of looking to their Legislatures to do these things for them, they, too, might have enough for all the legitimate purposes of local administration. But they all, in their unwise but deep-seated horror of anything savouring of direct taxation, are ready with their rejoinder: "We have the same system in these respects we had before Confederation. We had then, and with the sources of income we then surrendered, would now have enough for all our wants, without resorting to the local taxation which our people so much dislike. Why, if Confederation has been the great boon it is declared to be, should we be left in a worse condition locally than before Confederation was forced upon us?" And the rejoinder satisfies them whether it satisfies Ontario or not. But the real question is whether the financial basis of Confederation is sound, and fit to stand the wear and tear of actual trial. There is certainly some reason for saying it has not done so thus far, and for arguing that the settlement made was wrong in principle, that the Provinces should have been left in a less dependent condition, that they should have more flexible and expandible sources of income. Be this as it may, it is to be hoped that when the next inevitable demand for better terms is made, it will be met, not as hitherto by some temporary gift or expedient of doubtful constitutionality, but by a fair and fearless consideration of the question whether the financial basis of the Confederation does not need such revision and reconstruction as will forever put an end to all temptation to clamour for "better terms."

THE motion of which Mr. Mulock has given notice, informing Her Majesty, amongst other things, that the Canadian Commons have learned "that various public statements have been made calling in question the loyalty of the people of Canada to the political union now happily existing between this Dominion and the British Empire, and representing it as the desire of the people of Canada to sever such connection"; and assuring her "that such statements are wholly incorrect representations of the sentiments and aspirations of the people of Canada, who are amongst her Majesty's most loyal subjects, and are devotedly attached to the political union existing between Canada and the rest of the British Empire, and earnestly desire its continuance," is either uncalled-for or delusive. If there is any admixture of truth in those alleged statements, of which Her Majesty will probably first hear through Mr. Mulock's motion, then to that extent the motion is incorrect and misleading. If there is no admixture of truth in those statements then the resolution is unnecessary, and looks as if intended, as our American cousins would say, for "buncombe." In either case it is worthy of consideration whether the adoption of such a resolution would not put our loyal representatives in the attitude of those who do "protest too much." The question whether there is in Canada any growing disloyalty to the British throne and institutions needs definition. The answer will depend entirely upon what is meant by "disloyalty." That Canadians have no grievance against the Mother Country, that their prevailing sentiment is one of respect for the Queen's person and prerogative, of admiration for the much that is grand and noble in British history, institutions and traditions, and of desire to remain in some way associated with and sharers in the glories of Britannia's future as well as of her past, few will, we believe, be found to gainsay or doubt. But that the Canadian people as a whole, and especially that large and increasing proportion of them who have been born, and many of whose parents were born, on Canadian soil, look with complacency upon their present subordinate position as colonists, and are content to regard it as permanent, will, we venture to say, be affirmed by few cool and competent observers. It is not in the nature of things, certainly not in the Anglo-Saxon nature, that it should be so. It would not be to the credit of the Canadian character if no higher